

Upcycling notes

Love transforming your vintage finds? Stay one step ahead with our round-up of the latest news and products

COMPILED BY **CASSIE FAIRY**



PRESSING MATTERS

Preserve your garden flowers to use in future decoupage projects with a handcrafted heirloom press. It's made in the UK from sustainable oak and finished with a floral pattern, which is hand-painted using eco-friendly water-based paint. Each flower-press kit comes with seven layers of acid-free blotting paper and recycled card sheets to dry your foraged flora.

○ Wooden flower press, from £45; bluebrontide.com

ATOMIC!

Inject an authentic retro vibe into your interior with mid-century-style fabric in classic 1950s pastels and atomic patterns. This interior-weight pure cotton fabric is digitally printed in England using reactive inks to give superior wash and rub fastness, making it suitable for curtains, soft furnishings and upholstery projects.

○ Atomic Blonde (left) and Telstar fabric, from £72 per metre; 20thcenturycloth.com



SIMPLY DIVINE

This walnut cabinet has been given an art deco uplift by Lady Griddlebone, with a custom-mixed teal-green paint job and contrasting mustard mineral paint interior. The back is papered with Deco Martini designer wallpaper by Divine Savages, and the exterior features bespoke stencilling and gold-leaf touches to bring an opulent glow to the piece.

○ Charleston vintage art deco cabinet, £1,145; ladygriddlebone.com

TAKE NOTE

Keep your upcycling ideas organised in a softback sketchbook by Cambridge Imprint. Their lay-flat landscape books are covered in a litho-printed pattern and have 80 plain ivory pages which are perforated for easy removal. They're ideal for sketching designs, storing swatches or curating inspirational images for your next creative project.

○ Softback sketchbooks, from £12.50; cambridgeimprint.co.uk



BAMBOO BLISS

Bring the outdoors in with the Shanghai Garden fabric and wallpaper collection from Designers Guild. Classical brushwork brings a sense of movement to the leaves of the Bamboo wallpaper, which is heavyweight and washable, making it ideal for lining drawers or backing the interior of upcycled cupboards.

○ Bamboo Lime wallpaper, from £89 per roll; designersguild.com

PALETTE

October Mist, from £24.50 per 940ml; benjaminmoorepaint.co.uk

Pistachio and Parma violet

October Mist, the Benjamin Moore Colour of the Year, is a peaceful pistachio green that works well in bedrooms, kitchens and sunrooms. Combine it with simple cream woodwork and add refreshing lilac accents for a sweet Parma violet pop.

Whey White wood paint, £18 per 750ml; thorndown.co.uk


Sea Foam Party eggshell, from £49.99 per 2.5 litres; dowsingandreynolds.com

Iris Pallida No. 94 matt emulsion, from £41.95 per 2.5 litres; victorycolours.co.uk

Fresh Lilac emulsion, from £21 per litre; yescolours.com

The upcyclers files

Insider tips and tricks from those in the know



UPCYCLER:
Lucie Vassiliou,
Studio Lucie
LOCATION:
Marlow, Buckinghamshire
PROJECT:
Decoupage black and gold wardrobe
TOP TIP: Never cut corners when prepping. Start with all the required repairs and structural reinforcements. I always sand well and prime before I start any project

How did you first get into upcycling?

I spent my entire childhood at my parents' architectural practice, browsing through interiors magazines and books. I always loved creating handmade stuff and transforming spaces from a young age, whether that was painting walls in my room or sewing clothes for my dolls, but the passion for upcycling started when my husband and I bought our first house in 2010, which was a late Edwardian terrace. I knew I didn't want anything modern or new, so I started curating the rooms by sourcing and upcycling my own vintage pieces. The very first piece I upcycled was a simple nest of tables.

When did you decide to start your business?

Studio Lucie actually started while I was still working full time in events and communications in London. The birth of our son prompted me to rethink everything: our space, our lifestyle and our future as a family. We decided to move out of the city so that I could set up a proper home-based workshop for my business without compromising on my focus as a mum in my son's early years.

Tell us what you enjoy about upcycling.

When I revamp an old piece of furniture, I feel great about extending its lifespan as well as keeping its heritage. I always wonder who the furniture once belonged to, where it travelled, what historic events it lived through. I love it when I find forgotten objects from the past when I clean the pieces. I recently found a copy of *The Daily Telegraph* from 1965 at the bottom of an old storage trunk, headlining news about the



BEFORE Although a sturdy piece of furniture, the wardrobe's surface was plain and scratched

'I love decoupage as it's a relatively easy technique which has instant impact'

war in Vietnam and the Beatles. I took a long coffee break reading through those pages!

What's your favourite upcycling method?

I love decoupage my furniture as it's a relatively easy technique – after some practice – which has instant impact. You'll often see me decoupage papers – such as wallpapers, tissue or rice papers, even napkins – on door fronts or inside drawers. I tend to go for vintage and art deco motifs. I like smooth and sleek paint finishes and I absolutely love dark, dramatic colours combined with gold touches and paper decoupage. The era that inspires me the most in furniture design is without a doubt art deco.

Which products do you prefer?

Over the years, I've tried a variety of brands and I now mainly use Autentico, Little Greene and Fired Earth, but have also recently tried Fusion and Vintage with Grace. When I do



AFTER Decoupage brings Vermeer's famous image to life, with gold detailing

commissions, I like to use brands whose colour chart is a true representation of the paint, as I don't want my clients to have any unwelcome surprises when they see the finished piece. I love using Autentico's Gilding Metallic Gold Leaf and Posh Chalk decoupage papers – they are a dream to apply.

How did you transform this wardrobe?

This 1950s wardrobe lacked interest and needed something to make it pop. The central door was ideal for decoupage as it's completely flat and without any beading or carved detail. After sanding and priming, I painted the outside in Little Greene Lamp Black eggshell and I decoupage Margarita – aka *Girl with a Pearl Earring* – Posh Chalk Deluxe Decoupage Paper on the door. This paper is super-easy to apply and is a very durable rice paper. I did the interior in Autentico Nordic Blue eggshell, which is a captivating electric blue colour to match with the blue on Margarita's head scarf, which I also touched up with the same Nordic Blue. I also touched up her earring in a 3D pearl-effect acrylic paint. I finished the piece with gold lines running down the sides of the wardrobe and along each interior shelf. 🌟

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